THINK TANKS AND THE NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY FORMULATION PROCESS: *A COMPARISON OF CURRENT AMERICAN AND FRENCH PATTERNS*

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This essay investigates the process by which national security strategy is formulated; more precisely, it will look at the specific input to this process from the organizations known as think tanks. It will also attempt to compare the ways think tanks influence the national security strategy formulation process in the United States and in France.

We did not have to wait long after the collapse of the Soviet Union to see the so-called New World Order both illustrated and challenged by very different experiences—the overwhelming coalition military victory in the Persian Gulf on one hand, and the pitiable procrastination of Western countries to cope with the Yugoslavian crisis on the other—send us contradictory messages that we must carefully decipher. The euphoria resulting from the former may well be as misleading as the acrimony we see arising from the latter.

As a result of this turmoil, formulating national security strategy has become a much more difficult and subtle exercise than it was under the traditional strategy of containment. The policymaker now has to integrate many different perspectives to get a better grasp of this increasingly complex art. Our investigation of the national security strategy process will use, as examples, two documents that were issued within a few months of each other. The first is the White House report to the Congress entitled: "A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement" (July 1994). The French government issued in March 1994 its "Livre Blanc sur la Défense," which, despite some meaningful differences from the White House report, shows many significant similarities to it. This white paper will therefore be used as an example of the practice on the French side.

A nation's national security strategy has a profound impact on its defense acquisition policies, not only in determining the types of systems procured and quantities (i.e. more mobility of forces versus less heavy defensive weaponry), but in the emphasis the nation places upon cooperative acquisition of defense equipment with its allies and friends, which results in an acquisition policy that favors cooperative developments of a new defense system. According to the Department of Defense Directive on Defense Acquisition, even more preferred to a new development is the procurement (including modification) of commercially available systems or equipment, additional production (including modification) of already developed U.S. military systems or equipment, or allied systems or equipment.

In a similar way, the 1994 French "Livre Blanc sur la Défense" strongly stated that: "No future major program on conventional weapons seems likely to escape the logic of (international) cooperation." This is clearly seen as a key factor in affording the future defense expenditures required to fulfill future military needs. Therefore, we should see strong pressure coming from acquisition communities, on both sides of the Atlantic, to make every possible effort to bring together more cooperative projects.

The methodology for this research has included contacts with numerous and various think tanks both in Washington, DC, and in Paris, interviews with senior political science and foreign policy analysts in some of these organizations, and a general survey of the national security strategy inputs from think tanks from 1992 through mid-1994.

The Formulation Products

As products of national security strategy formulation processes, the White House report will be refered to as "NSS 94," and the "Livre Blanc sur la Défense" as the white paper.

NSS 94 is required by law: The demand for this document originates in the Goldwater–Nichols Act of 1986. Its objective and content are codified in 50 USC 404a (see Appendix A). This report must each year assess the general frame for the national security strategy. Presumably it may also be useful in supporting the annual presidential budget request to the Congress. Actually, the last issues of the report have been affected by several changes in the administration, and have not met the requirement for an annual issue. As high-level political documents, such reports are not intended to assess precisely the detailed goals and means of the U.S. policy, but are limited to a broader view of the global national security strategy. It is up to more focused processes, such as the Bottom-Up Review in the military arena, to enter into this level of detailed information.

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The French white paper has the same broad objective of assessing the national security strategy. Because of the different balance of power between the executive and legislative branches of government in France, this white paper was written as an initiative of the prime minister, without any formal preset frame. Its official purpose is, as stated in its introduction: "To acquire a better understanding of our time and of the part played in it by the defense of our country. To place defense policy in the long-term perpective that is indispensable to it. To explain defense to the French people and rally their support" (p. 4). It is interesting to note that the previous white paper on defense had been issued 22 years previously. This long interval between the two may be explained by the relative stability of the global vision of the world during the Cold War period. It also probably reflects a traditional French consensus on the national strategic posture throughout the internal political changes of the period: the eventual adjustments to the strategy were made during periodic updates of the successive Military Midterm Planning Acts. But, the dramatic changes that occurred after the collapse of the Soviet Union obviously required an indepth re-examination of the national security strategy.

The purpose of the white paper is not primarily to inform the Parliament, but to achieve a broader education of public opinion. Like NSS 94, it has embedded a much larger concept of national security, departing from the merely military approach that prevailed a few years ago. Unlike NSS 94 and more like the Bottom-Up Review, it takes in fairly detailed consideration the military forces format. Beyond these technical distinctions, we can also note differences that deal more with differences in the approach of the security concept itself. For instance, NSS 94 pays special attention to the doctrine for the engagement of U.S. forces abroad, reflecting a major enduring concern among the American people.

It is also significant to note that NSS 94 discusses environmental issues, a subject absent from the French white paper. But, the white paper does discuss sociocultural issues, such as the relationship between the nation and its military institution, that are absent from NSS 94. It would be interesting, but also beyond the purpose of this essay, to investigate further the differences in the content of the two documents (see Appendix B): Let us simply suggest here that these differences are more dependent on contingent domestic political considerations at the time of their writing, than on more fundamental features of the so-called national characters.

The Formulation Processes

The U.S. Process

NSS 94, like its predecessors, was issued as the product of an interagency process, in which the National Security Council (NSC) plays the central role. A few senior officers in this organization were in charge of producing the drafts, and of acting as the linchpin of the process. The drafting began in July 1993, based on the strategic framework that was used in parallel for the Department of Defense (DoD) Bottom-Up Review. President Bill Clinton, who had been in office for six months, made it clear that the document

should also integrate some aspects from his own campaign platform. The first draft, ready by August 1993, was not circulated at once among the different agencies, but was used as a base for six major speeches on foreign policy that were delivered by the president and his cabinet members in September.

From the comments they received on these speeches, the NSC team produced a second draft, which was submitted to the other agencies by the end of October. Then at year's end, DoD was to submit its budget request to the White House. It became apparent that the two processes—budgeting and national security strategy formulation (which until then had operated separately)—had to be joined. So a third draft was prepared, reflecting the changes that then affected the strategic thinking of some decision-making layers at the White House and at the Pentagon.

Since it appeared unlikely that unanimous agreement would be achieved on this third version, a reduced team drafted a fourth version in March 1994, which eventually was approved and issued in July. Its publication, according to its writers, seems to have passed largely unnoticed, except perhaps by a very specialized public.

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The process took one full year, during which numerous interactions with other government processes had introduced painful iterations. This was probably not optimal for a process that must be repeated yearly. Nevertheless, we must recognize that NSS 94 was the first formulation by a Democratic administration of its national security strategy after the collapse of the Soviet Union, in a context of already declining military budgets at home, and several embarrassing situations (e.g., Somalia and Bosnia) developing abroad. Such may explain the difficulty.

The French Process

Unlike the (theoretically) annual U.S. report, the French white paper was a rather exceptional event, and its elaboration followed a special *ad hoc* process. In this case, the prime minister assigned the task on May 26, 1993, to a special interagency commission chaired by the vice-chairman of the Conseil d'Etat,[1] which gathered 20 high-ranking officials from the different concerned ministries, and 4 independent experts, among whom were the chairman of the French Institute for International Relations (IFRI) and the honour chairman of the Renault automobile firm (see Appendix C). This commission worked out its final document through the usual process of breaking down into several subcommissions, addressing issues such as: (a) the global outlook and the strategic trends, (b) Europe and Defense, (c) financial resources, (d) industrial base, and (e) human resources.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Defense (MoD) itself organized its contribution through diverse working groups that fed the subcommissions with information and propositions that reflected the MoD's prospective.

These groups were able to incorporate numerous inputs from nongovernment sources, such as the major companies of

the defense industry. All this work was concluded within nine months, with a 130-page document that received a double preface from both the prime minister and the minister of defense. The document was approved on February 16, by President Francois Mitterand after a discussion within the "Conseil de Défense,"[2] and was presented to the defense committees of the two Parliament chambers on February 23. On the same day, the document was publicized in the media. As a white paper, this document did not have to be submitted for the Parliament's approval. Moreover, it was intended to provide a broad strategic framework for the future government work, and more specifically for the examination and enactment by the Parliament of the Military Midterm Planning Act (1995–2000 period) that was to be submitted at the 1994 fall session of the Parliament.

Think Tanks in the American Process

The American Think Tanks

It is not the purpose of this work to investigate in depth the nature of the American think tanks. Nevertheless, it is striking to recognize that any definition has difficulties embracing the variety of groups, companies, organizations, etc., that call themselves think tanks. James A. Smith has defined them as: "...[the] planning and advisory institutions..., the private, nonprofit research groups that operate on the margins of this nation's formal political processes" (Smith, 1993, p. xiii). Although this definition captures the essential features of most think tanks, some significant organizations do not fit it, but are nevertheless, without any doubt, real think tanks. For example, they include the Institute for National Security Studies, which is actually part of DoD, the *Armed Forces Journal International*, which belongs more to the media world, or Rand Corporation, which has many features of a "normal" advising and servicing company.

I would suggest here that, more than by their actual legal form, fiscal status, private or public ownership, or origin of funding, think tanks are characterized by their common purpose *to influence political processes from the margins.* The time horizon of their influence and their individual strategy to achieve this influence may vary from one to another, but all think tanks pursue that kind of purpose, and operate on the margin of the formal process, or, more precisely, at the junction of this process with some specific outside world. They play an indispensable role in formulating both the questions and the answers in the dialogue between two worlds: the world of informed public opinion and its experts, and the world of governmental bureaucracies. In this dialogue, where, more and more "... the most serious questions cannot even be posed, let alone answered, in the language of common sense," they act as intermediaries and interpreters (Smith, 1993, p. 238). They both feed the bureaucracy with the ideas that bureaucrats have no time to dig out by themselves (ideas brokers, as Smith describes them), and to circulate these ideas to build public consensus. They "... are the principal arteries through which knowledge flows and is absorbed, like oxygen, into the bloodstream of political life" (Smith, 1993, p. 238).

What Were the Issues Raised, and How?

The Role of the United States in the World. The fundamental issue that must be addressed in the formulation of a national security strategy is what this nation sees as its role in the world. This has been and still is a very controversial issue in the United States. The classic opposition of the isolationist view versus the globalist view has been raised again in the aftermath of the Cold War, with shifting emphasis on the economic, social, or cultural aspects of the debate. More precisely, the debate has shifted from whether or not the United States should withdraw to its continent and concentrate on domestic problems, to what precise National interests are at stake abroad and to how much this nation is willing to pay for the preservation of these interests. Think tanks have widely discussed this issue. The conservative Heritage Foundation has traditionally advocated less exclusive American engagement, as assessed, for example, by Doug Seay (1992):

> America need not, and will not long wish to, continue to assume the principal burden for keeping order around the world. But it does have an interest in the maintenance of that order. Only by encouraging its allies, past and future, to assume their proper share of the burden can it safely relinquish the lion's share of the burden.

At the same time, the Democratically oriented Brookings Institution proposed a more assertive stance toward global engagement, by promoting, for example, William Perry's concept for a cooperative security:

> A cooperative security regime is designed to minimize any underlying military causes for such conflicts, to deter rogue nations from initiating such conflicts, and if deterrence fails, to provide a multinational military force to defeat any aggressor nation.

From the libertarian side of the political continuum, the CATO Institution warns against any American involvement in what are seen as outside problems, thus bringing to the United States undue risks and excessive government burden (Ravenal, 1991):

> In the emerging era of international relations, even great nations—even the "sole surviving superpower," if one insists on that—will do better to adjust to the conditions of the international system than to perpetuate attempts, however attractive and apparently constructive, to control the course of events in the world.

A significant majority agrees on the necessity of promoting regional solutions as an alternative to U.S. intervention (Conry, 1994), by transferring more responsibilities to regional powers and relying more on regional security structures. Institute for National Security Studies senior fellow Patrick M. Cronin argues that "the best course is to pursue U.S. interests internationally through a concert of power with our key allies," in a Wilsonian reminiscence (Cronin, 1993).

All these ideas, the contradiction of which is at the core of the most existential

problem facing the United States, are echoed in NSS 94: ... it is clear that we cannot police the world; but it is equally clear that we must exercise global leadership" (p. 5).

The National Interests. Even if "global leadership" is a generally well-accepted (appealing yet vague) American ideal, it is hard to deduce from NSS 94 what precisely are the national interests that we are protecting by exercising this global leadership, especially at the eventual cost of American lives. Think tanks have brought some tentative answers to this question.

Some answers are in the negative form: "Instead of assuming grave risks when vital American interests are not at stake, the United States should distance itself from regional disputes that could go nuclear,'' the CATO Institute warns policymakers (Carpenter, 1993, p. 1). Some Wilsonian interests, which had become favorites of American foreign policy in past admistrations, do not appeal to the Heritage Foundation: "America does not have endless resources to squander on some open-ended crusade for democracy and human rights" (Holmes, 1994, p. 7).

Some conclusions are more assertive: Policymakers should classify the national interests in thinkable categories, such as "vital, important, and marginal," as proposed by the Heritage Foundation (Holmes, 1994). This approach, also stressed by military-academic institutions such as the National Defense University, may be too rational for the accommodation of political flexibility. This may be why NSS 94 prefers to focus on broader objectives, such as "Enhancing Our Security," "Promoting Prosperity at Home," and "Promoting Democracy," without paying too much attention to the real nature of the objective links between these generic goals and the actual national security concerns. One could argue that these broad objectives would allow any sort of foreign or domestic, economic or military issue the government deemed important to be called a "national security" issue. As a matter of fact, NSS 94 embraces a very wide range of preoccupations in the generic category of national interest: For example, a strong emphasis in the document is put on environmental issues, echoing M. Renner of the WorldWatch Institute:

> Environmental threats with the potential to erode the habitability of the planet are forcing humanity to consider national security in far broader terms than that guaranteed solely by force of arms (Renner, 1989, p. 7).

The Resources. At the same time, this broad picture allows NSS 94 to remain very elusive about what should be the appropriate answer to a threat directed against these interests. This may be, after all, good strategy, according to Sun Tsu's aphorism: "All warfare is based on deception" (1963, p. 66). And it also preserves the possibility for any necessary adjustment of the policy in the difficult art of resource allocation. But although the document

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prudently avoids any precise assessment of the effective forces format that would meet the requirements of the strategy, it wisely points at the generic source of any national power: the economy. Answering the claim by Norman D. Levin of Rand for "[a] greater link between U.S. foreign policy goals and domestic, especially economic, objectives" (1994, pp. xv–xvi), NSS 94 stresses such economic objectives as enhancing American competitiveness, promoting the partnership with business and labor, and enhancing access to foreign markets, in a way that leaves little doubt about the will of the government to actively invest itself in the promotion of the American defense industry.

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How Do American Think Tanks Work?

One could deduce, from this general survey of the correlation between the issues discussed by think tanks in their publications and the content of NSS 94, that these organizations create and inject ideas in the policy process mainly through pamphlets or books. This conclusion would overestimate the influence of these publications. These documents are side-effects, if not residues, of the real value-added activities of think tanks as "ideas brokers," "brains brokers," and "personal networks operators." Let us describe briefly these categories.

The Ideas Brokers. This title of the very well-informed book by James A. Smith (1993) captures much of what is the purest expression of their activity. Whether think tankers create original ideas (which is arguable), or more likely bring up new combinations or new applications of preexisting ideas, their output is basicaly conceptual. These archetypes of the "symbolic analysts" (Reich, 1992) deliver their conceptual product to numerous customers: first of all to the senior officers, civil servants, or staffers who are the concrete actors of the policy process through numerous government departments, bureaus, committees, or agencies. Then their ideas are purveyed to the top ranking political personnel of the government: secretaries or under-secretaries, chairpersons of diverse committees, and other special advisors. And finally they submit their product to public opinion, or at least to the informed part of it that constitutes the defense community.

Many channels are used for this activity, and are adapted to each objective. Top-level political personalities are more likely to be reached at think tank conferences or symposia, where they deliver keynote addresses or after-dinner speeches, and listen to selected panelists. Organizing such events is therefore a large—and often lucrative—part of think tank activity. The intermediate level of senior actors is often treated more in depth: focus workshops and seminars that gather restricted caucuses allow think tankers to interact with them, to trade ideas and propose views. This private interaction is often supplemented by more public and official events, such as testifying before Congressional committees. The opportunity for such direct interaction naturally depends

on the degree of proximity or of political sympathy between the think tank and the current administration. This explains why, for example, DoD's analysts from the Institute for National Security Studies (INSS) or people from the Brookings Institution may have been more active than others during the Democratic administration's preparation of NSS 94.

This is not to say that opposition think tanks have remained inactive: the Heritage Foundation, for example, has been very active in proposing its own views of the national security strategy (Holmes, 1994) to such powers as Rep. Newt Gingrich, Speaker of the House of Representatives. This approach has included proposition of fully crafted pieces of legislation, such as a pending bill titled the "National Security Act of 1995."

All these private meetings, seminars, or conferences give birth to another important activity: publication. Articles, books, compilations of conference presentations, etc., are a significant part of think tank activity, and of their revenue (up to 50%). But they are not so much the channel through which think tanks operate, as they are the signs by which the outside observer may track their direct interactive activity.

The Brains Brokers. Think tanks do not exist on ideas alone. They also require brains, usually associated with individuals. Staff members often are migrants from senior political analyst positions or derive from diverse kinds of fellowship association in think tanks; some staff members come from senior political positions within the administration or the Congress, and vice versa. This provides a privileged way for think tanks to influence the policy-making process. The "revolving door," as this practice has come to be called, has been used intensely. Pr. Edward Warner came from Rand to head the Bottom-Up Review process at the Pentagon as Assistant Secretary for Strategy and Requirements. Walter Slocombe, presently Under Secretary for Policy, came from Brookings. Secretary of Defense William Perry himself elaborated his concept of cooperative security, in association with John D. Steinburger and Ash Carter (Assistant Secretary for International and Security Policy), as a distinguished fellow at Brookings.

The American Enterprise Institute hosts such distinguished fellows as former Defense Secretary Dick Cheney or United Nation Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick, while the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) has welcomed such individuals as Henry Kissinger, Zbigniew Brzezinski, both National Security Advisers and a former Secretary of State, and James Schlesinger, who headed two Cabinet departments. And it is likely that the new Republican 104th Congress will give the Heritage Foundation the opportunity to see some of its analysts play a direct role on Capitol Hill, where they will be able to implement the policies that they had been designing for years through their "Mandate for Leadership" (Butler, Sanera, & Weinrod, 1984).

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It would be inaccurate to presume that these individuals and their ideas are mere products of think tanks. But think tanks

are the places where such individuals find the opportunity to formulate, elaborate, confront, enrich, validate, and finally diffuse their ideas through their collaboration with the regular scholars that constitute the permanent core of the organizations. Think tanks provide them with the opportunity to reach a selected audience. And former top-level officials bring to think tanks that host them some priceless aura that ensures the success of the events they support. Like a symbiosis, this often-enduring relationship between these individuals and think tanks benefits both parties.

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Think Tanks as Personal Network Operators. Beyond their functions as idea and brains brokers, think tanks possess one further, and fundamental, feature. As they organize private meetings, restricted seminars, and public symposiums, and trade senior individuals with the administration, think tanks build and operate networks. They link different worlds: the government world, the business world, the academic world, and the military world, whose preoccupations and even languages differ so much from each other. But ideas do not circulate by themselves. Think tanks provide the venues—physical or virtual[3]—where people periodically gather and interact. I would suggest that it is for and from these interactions that think tanks build the networks that constitute the very base of the policy-making system. This activity passes largely unnoticed and is nearly impossible to trace.

What Was the Overall Contribution to NSS 94?

Curiously enough, all the actors in the process that were interviewed said that NSS 94 received very few direct contributions from think tanks. However, we have seen that the issues themselves that were addressed in the document have been comprehensively discussed and published by several think tanks. It seems therefore that all this activity has taken place either beside or much ahead of the formulation of the document itself. The chaotic process that we described earlier may be responsible in part for that shortcoming: it seems that the administration was too busy struggling with its own internal frictions to pay much attention to the outside world. Should we view this as the result of excessive self-confidence on the part of the administration? Or on the contrary, did policy makers consider this writing as a futile and formal exercise that had to be achieved at the least intellectual cost in order to concentrate on more short-term but really burning issues, such the changing relationships with Russia or China, or the Bosnia crisis?

Whatever the cause, I would argue that this disconnection between the administration and the think tank network may lead to, or be the sign of, an impoverishment of the relationship between the current government and the ideas-creative layers of the society. We must look to the Congress and the Clinton Administration to see whether this relationship is revital-

ized and to stress the need for a renewed and enhanced political debate. In any case, every think tank analyst could endorse this claim by Rand's Ronald D. Asmus (1994, p. ix): "If the United States is to find a new post-Cold War consensus, then airing and debating these views and differences is a healthy and inevitable part of building this new consensus."

Think Tanks in the French Process

Who Are the French Tanks?

Some basic distinctions exist between French think tanks and their American counterparts. We may define them in various ways. The more efficient is to come back to Smith's definition (1993, p. xiii): "the private, nonprofit research groups that operate on the margins of the nation's formal political processes." On each point of this definition, we can find a wide range of different patterns for these think tanks in France, as well as in the United States.

Let us consider first the status of the group. We shall find groups ranging from the totally private AERO company, and "Loi de 1901" nonprofit associations such as the Center for Strategic Research (CREST)[4] or foundations such as the recent Fondation pour les Etudes de Défense, to government in-house groups such as the Defense Acquisition Agency's (DGA) Center for Defense Analysis, or the Délégation aux Affaires Stratégiques (DAS).

As in the United States, a number of think tanks are university-linked; but those are generally very limited teams (and sometimes single individuals). Except perhaps for Pr. Schmitt's studies in the defense economy field at Paris-Porte Dauphine University, these teams do not usually make a significant contribution.

The Institute for National Security Studies, hosted here by the National Defense University, has a near equivalent in the Groupes d'Étude et de Recherche hosted by the Center of Higher Armament Studies in Paris.

Some think tanks are more closely linked to the political world: various foundations, "Centre d'Études," forums or "Carrefours de Réflexion" act as idea providers, diffusers, or catalysts for groups or individuals pursuing some political objectives. In some cases, they seem to be more like temporary refuges where out-of-office senior political personal find an active rest before a hypothetical return to power.

What are the sources of funding for these groups? Here again, the answers vary. Many depend on government contracts for the major part of their activities. Here, they clearly differ from American think tanks, many of which rely mainly on endowments and private funding, or are partly self-funded through profitable publications and conferences. French tradition does not encourage such private interest in national security thinking.

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The Objectives of French Think Tanks

Do French think tanks mainly pursue only educational and research objectives, or do they also try to influence the policymaking process? Here also, like American think tanks, their aims vary:

some sponsor pure thinkers (if there are any in this world)—the Woodrow Wilson Scholars nearly mirror the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique researchers in foreign and defense policy; others are openly partisan, such as the left-wing Institute for International Relations and Strategy (IRIS) and the right-wing Center for Prospective and Strategic Studies (CEPS). We must keep in mind that the French Parliament is, traditionally if not constitutionally, much less involved, or at least at a lesser detailed level, in foreign policy and national security policy than its American counterpart. There is a strong tradition under the institutions of the French Fifth Republic to recognize the very preeminent prerogative of the president in this area. As a result, the French system allows the executive bureaucracy to shape these policies without so much interference from either the political parties, or the Parliament. The need for circulating ideas is therefore less important and, consequently, the input from French think tanks much less visible in the policy process.

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Fewer think tanks, smaller in size and with fewer financial resources, are less influential in the policy-making process—this is how French think tanks compare to U.S. ones, which have been quite properly pictured as a "quintessentially American" institution (Smith, 1993, p. xiii).

Did French Think Tanks Contribute to the White Paper?

There is no need here to look in great detail at how French think tanks usually operate: by and large, they use the same means as their American counterparts. Seminars or conferences, testifying before government or Parliamentary commissions, publications—French think tanks do all these, although on a lesser scale, because of their lower visibility in the political landscape, and the relative lack of interest shown them by the administration.

Think tanks published several books or articles during the preparation of the white paper. For instance, in a special issue of the *Défense Nationale* journal, chairman of Comité d'Études de Défense Nationale Paul-Marie de la Gorce suggested a broad national security strategy framework. He emphasized the need of defining first the national interests: "[The threats] can only be defined relative to those interests that have to be defended, and one should begin by defining these latter" (1993, p. 10). His articulation of the geo-strategic context relied on four premises: (a) the existence of one military superpower; (b) the existence of several nuclear powers; (c) the new instability of the Eurasian continent, from the Adriatic sea to Chinese borders; and (d) the growing instability of those "strategic zones where political, and eventually military, instability comes from economic and social crises, with their ethnical and religious spillovers" (la Gorce, 1993, p. 15).

From these premises, de la Gorce derived several propositions, specially advocating for nuclear deterrence and conventional force projection capacities.

In the same issue, former chairman of the Fondation pour les Études de Défense Nationale, Pierre Dabezies, published "Réflexions sur le Livre Blanc" (1993). His main argument stressed the need to substitute an "approach by the political project" for a mere static assessment of national interests. From that perspective, he discussed how cross choices between different—and maybe contradictory—projects muddle the French strategic landscape: the pursuit of the global "new world order," the tightening of links with NATO, the building of the European Union and of a hypothetical' foreign and security common policy" being among the most burning issues.

These discussions were clearly in the scope of the white paper. Nevertheless, they were more broadly political, editoriallike assessments than scholarly studies usually expected from think tanks. Further, there was no indication that these pieces reflected anything more than personal and selective views—not being part of more broad research within any organized framework.

An exception is the book published by CREST director Alain Baer titled: *Thoughts on the Nature of Future Defense Systems* (1993). This book originated in the work of one of the research groups that operate in connection with the Center for Higher Armaments Studies.[5] It presents a comprehensive approach of new defense concepts, both in terms of organization and material, especially stressing the importance of real-time intelligence. It proposed creation of a permanent National Security Council, on the American model, and a new concept for the organization of the forces, which would be articulated between interior and exterior forces, according to whether their vocation would be to defend the metropolitan territory, or to be projected abroad. Alain Baer also provided a fairly extensive study of the current "military revolution" and of its implications in terms of technology and weapons systems.

This study was clearly original among other more political and circumstantial publications, and was probably the only one that could be considered as a think tank product.

What Has Been the Real Input from Think Tanks to the White Paper?

Specifically in the case of the white paper, it appears from the interviews completed that the *ad hoc* commission had very little input from think tanks: (a) Just one independent expert in the commission itself was the head of a think tank (the French Institute for International Relations); (b) no request for any advice was ever made by the commission to think tanks themselves, although the commission heard many experts *intuitu personae*; and (c) the commission received several spontaneous contributions from diverse organizations, such as professional syndicates or corporative groupments, but none of them standing think tanks.

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As in the case of the writing of NSS 94, some external factors may have contributed to keeping think tanks apart from

the policy process. For example, it has been largely noticed that this white paper was a product of the so-called "cohabitation," which is a strange situation of government in which a left-wing president shares the power with a right-wing prime minister. This kind of political compromise seems to have become a French "favorite" for nearly 10 years. If it has led to some serious confrontation on domestic issues, it has never seriously affected the unity of action of the government on foreign policy and defense issues. But, it may have influenced the autonomy of thought of the commission and its ability to launch into more creative strategic thinking. The writers of the white paper could therefore have perceived their assignment as not so much to bring up new ideas (which could have justified resorting to think tanks), but to achieve a balanced and smooth product that could get the broadest political assent possible.

"[The French administration] therefore has less inclination than the American one to look outside for ideas or conceptual achievements that it presumably can provide on its own."

Comparison of the Two Patterns

In both France and the United States, organizations that more or less fit the description of a think tank usually operate at the margin of the national security strategy-making process. These organizations are much more common in the United States and enjoy a higher visibility, because of their number, size, and traditional implication in political life.

Specifically concerning NSS 94 and the French white paper, think tanks seem to have had little direct input. In the United States, where they have nevertheless been very active in debating the major issues related to the national security strategy, they probably suffered from a lack of interest by the administration for their input. But this current loose relationship between U.S. think tanks and the administration is unusual. It is, however, the rule in France, where these institutions are traditionally kept outside the political process by an administration more confident in its own capacity to elaborate the policy. Among other reasons, this major difference between the two countries may be related to the history of their form of government. This observation by Smith seems true today: "... in countries with older civil service tradition and fewer political appointments, experts could be found in the bureaucracy much earlier than they could in the American system, where nonpartisan experts typically had to be housed on the outside" (1993, pp. 228–229). From that perspective, the long American tradition of distrust for a centralized government and the chronic instability of the upper layers of the administration (because of the great number of short-lived political appointees), have probably contributed to enhance and sustain the importance of think tanks in political life. These organizations assume a central function in improving the continuity of thought of the nation, and in helping elaborate political wisdom. Yet, if we agree with Smith's statement (1993, p. xi) that "[t]here is something troubling about the relationship among experts, leaders, and citizens that

tends to make American politics more polarized, shortsighted, and fragmented—and often less intelligent—than it should be,"[6] we may assume that even think tanks fall short of the task.

On the French side, think tanks are granted only a little influence in policy making. We have already stressed the major feature of the French administration as a very intellectually autonomous one: several centuries of government service, a high ideal of public service, a long history of centralized power from Colbert up to the present, make this administration think of itself as the one of the best and the brightest. It therefore has less inclination than the American one to look outside for ideas or conceptual achievements that it presumably can provide on its own.

We have described American think tanks as key actors in building the personal networks that vitalize the policy-making process. In France also, personal networks are fundamental in the policy process; the difference is that these networks, in a sense, preexist through the links that gathered many senior military or civil servants from their education in the two or three major institutions that form the French élite (Alumni of the École Nationale d'Administration or of the École Polytechnique, for example, operate very far-reaching and powerful networks that cross the highest layers of the political, administrative, and business worlds.) Therefore less room exists in that function for organizations such as think tanks. I would suggest here that this pattern of policy making will soon find its own limits: As the European integration process goes on, these education-based national networks will no longer operate at a sufficient level. Since the "Euro-Elite" will obviously be more diversified than the national French one, there certainly will be a need for new links and venues where the "Eurocrats," as they are sometimes called (a bit pejoratively), will be able to interact and forge together their political thought.

Conclusion

As David M. Ricci states (1993, p. 182): "Think tanks fit somewhere into public life, but no one knows exactly where that is."

This essay has tried to investigate how they fit into the national security strategy formulation process. How they operate in this very specific field in the United States, compared with the French way, suggests that these patterns do not only depend on internal features of these organizations, but also reflect major traits of the policy-making process. The importance of their input in the U.S. process, their visibility in political life, and their very existence are fundamentally linked to the characteristics of the American political system. This is confirmed by contrast with the French example, and this observation agrees with the thesis expressed (from a political science perspective) by Ricci (1993) and from a more historical one by Smith(1993). Smith finds think tanks a specific solution to the no-less-specific problem of the American policy-making system. More precisely, they help to build

"This essay has tried to investigate how [think tanks] fit into the national security strategy formulation process."

and operate the personal networks that facilitate the complex interactions between and among the industrial, business, academic, and political worlds; and then between these civilian entities and the administration and the Congress, as the two major protagonists.

Finally, I would suggest that this hypothesis could be confirmed by observing the policy-making system of the European Union: In the same way that think tanks emerged in the United States after World War II, and spectacularly increased in the 1970s and 1980s, accompanying the increase in the federal government,[7] we should expect similar organizations to emerge and develop at the periphery of the European Commission in Brussels, following the implementation of the Maastricht treaty.

APPENDIX A - EXTRACT FROM 50 USC 404A

Each national security strategy report shall set forth the national security strategy of the United States and shall include a comprehensive description and discussion of the following:

(1) The worldwide interests, goals, and objectives of the United States that are vital to the national security of the United States.

(2) The foreign policy, worldwide commitments, and national defense capabilities of the United States necessary to deter aggression and to implement the national security strategy of the United States.

(3) The proposed short-term and long-term uses of the political, economic, military, and other elements of the national power of the United States to protect or promote the interests and achieve the goals and objectives referred to in paragraph (1).

(4) The adequacy of the capabilities of the United States to carry out the national security strategy of the United States, including an evaluation of the balance among the capabilities of all elements of the national power of the United States to support the implementation of the national security strategy.

APPENDIX B - STRUCTURAL COMPARISON OF THE TWO BASIC DOCUMENTS

A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement	Livre Blanc sur la Engagement Défense 1994
Preface (W. J. Clinton)	Préface (E. Balladur)
	Préface (F. Leotard)
I Introduction	Introduction
	First Part: The Strategic Context
	1. International Prospect
II Advancing Our Interests	2. Defense Policy Objectives
	2.1 Defending France's Interests
	2.2 Constructing Europe
	2.3 Implementing a Global Conception of Defense
	3. International Reference Framework
	3.1 Toward a New European Security
	3.2 Reinforcing U.N. Role
	3.3 Bilateral Cooperation
II.1 Enhancing Our Security	4. Our Defense Strategy
Maintaining a Strong Defense Capability Major Regional Contingencies Overseas Presence Counterterrorism ... Combatting Terrorism Fighting Drug Trafficking Other Missions	5. The Capabilities of the Armed Forces

Deciding When and How to Employ U.S. Forces	3.4 Arms Control, Disarmament and Nonproliferation Treaties
Combatting the Spread and Use of Weapons of Mass Destruction	
Nonproliferation and Counterproliferation	
Strategic Nuclear Forces	id
Arms Control	
Peace Operations	
Strong Intelligence Capabilities	9.5 Organization of Information
The Environment	6. Human Resources
2.2 Promoting Prosperity at Home	9.4 Economic Defense
Enhancing American Competitiveness	7. Arms Policy and Industrial Strategy
Partnership with Business and Labor	7.3 New State/Arms Industry Relationship
Enhancing Access to Foreign Markets The NAFTA Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation Uruguay Round of GATT U.S.–Japan Framework Agreement Expending the Realm of Free Trade	7.4 An Export Policy
Strengthening Macroeconomic Coordination	
Providing for Energy Security	
Promoting Sustainable Development Abroad Promoting Democracy	8. Defense Effort

III Integrated Regional Approches	
Europe and Eurasia	
East Asian and the Pacific	
The Western Hemisphere	
The Middle East, Southwest, and South Asia	
Africa	
	9. Defense and Society
IV Conclusions	Conclusion

APPENDIX C - COMPOSITION OF THE WHITE PAPER COMMISSION

Chairman
Marceau Long, *vice-chairman of the Conseil d'État*

Office of the Prime Minister
General Schmitt, *special advisor*
Préfet Marland, *advisor for domestic affairs*
Rear Admiral Lecointre, *head of military staff*
General Lerche, *head of Secrétariat Général de la Défense Nationale*

Defense Ministery
M. Donnedieu de Vabres, *special assistant*
Admiral Lanxade, *chief of the joint staff*
General Conze, *head of DGA (Defense Acquisition Agency)*
M. Roussely, *general secretary for administration*
General Rannou, *head of military staff*
M. Mallet, *director for strategic affairs*

State Department
M. Racine, *special assistant*
M. Guéhenno, *head of CAP (Center for Analysis and Prospective Studies)*
M. Barry-Delongchamps, *director for strategic affairs*

Ministry of Treasury
Ms. Bouillot, *budget director*

Ministry of Interior
Préfet Riolacci

Ministry of Research
M. Paolini, *special assistant*

Ministry of Industry
M. Lombard, *director for industrial strategy*

Ministry of International Cooperation
M. Pouillieute, *head of staff*

Atomic Energy Agency
M. Baléras, *director for military applications*

Independent Experts
M. de Montbrial
M. Levy
M. Prada, *Cour des Comptes (General Accounting Office)*
Ambassador Robin

APPENDIX D - INTERVIEWS COMPLETED

In the U.S.:

Col. Richard Barry, *Institute for National Security Studies*

Bruce Blair, *The Brookings Institution*

Lawrence DiRita, *The Heritage Foundation*

Capt. Keith Hans, *National Security Council Staff*

Patrick Glynn, *American Enterprise Institute*

Robert Grant, *director U.S. CREST*

Eric Peterson, *vice-president, Center for Strategic and International Studies*

In France:

Col. (Armt. Corp) Patrick Auroy, *Livre Blanc Commission Secretariat*

General (Armt. Corp) Alain Cremieux, *former Commandant of the Center for Higher Armament Studies (CHEAr)*

Jean-Francois Delpech, *director of the Center for Strategic Research (CREST)*

General Eric de la Maisonneuve, *director of the Foundation for Defense Studies (FED)*

Thierry de Montbrial, *director of the French Institute for International Relations (IFRI)*

End Notes

1. In French government institutions, the "Conseil d'État" is an equivalent of the U.S. Supreme Court, in its role of judging the disputes arising between the individuals and the state. It also enjoys substantial legislative and regulatory powers.

2. This structure has a function and a composition similar to those of the U.S. National Security Council. But unlike the NSC, it has no substantial supporting bureaucracy.

3. The Heritage Foundation operates a 24-hour online computer service having an explicit name: "Town Hall—The Conservative Meeting Place."

4. It may be worth noting that CREST has the rather exceptional feature of having a U.S.-based sister organization, US CREST, in Arlington, VA, whose vocation is specifically to work on transatlantic issues.

5. This institution is, although on a lesser scale, an equivalent of the Industrial College of the Armed Forces.

6. The Research Institute of the Western European Union headed by John Roper in Paris may represent a prototype (although certainly specific in its belonging to the WEU) of these future Euro-think tanks.

7. The increase in the number of White House staff is a good indicator of this rise of "big government": the staff comprised just 48 people in 1944 under President Franklin D. Roosevelt. It rose to 275 in 1960 under President Dwight D. Eisenhower, and increased to 540 in 1975 under President Gerald Ford. Today, the Executive Officer of the President consists of about 2,000 individuals.

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